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- the provision of English-as-a-second-language/dialect programs and of orientation, assessment, and placement procedures that reflect respect for and understanding of the needs and wishes of the immigrant child and his/her parents;
- the use of languages other than English or French in the instruction of pupils who are in the process of learning one of Canada's two official languages;
- the provision of heritage language classes for elementary school students and opportunities to study languages – in addition to English and French – in secondary school;
- the use of multilingual resource personnel to facilitate communication between parents and teachers, the involvement of parents and community members in the life of the school as volunteer helpers and as resource personnel to the staff, the issuance of school publications in the first languages of the parents, and the appointment of parents of different cultural backgrounds to advisory committees, task force groups, and multicultural councils;
- the use of textbooks and other learning materials that ensure a multicultural perspective and avoid bias and stereotyping;
- objective treatment of all ethnic groups in curricular materials and in classroom practices;
- the provision of multicultural/multiracial pupil leadership seminars designed to develop leadership skills in secondary school pupils;
- the adoption of policies on affirmative action and race relations and the development of programs of implementation;
- the provision of professional development opportunities that allow teachers to expand their awareness of and deepen their sensitivity to cultural differences;
- the provision of citizenship and language instruction for landed immigrants and English-as-a-second-language classes for adults.

**Education for a Multicultural Society**

Since publicly supported elementary and secondary education in the Province of Ontario is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and the school boards, educators have a special duty to provide educational experiences that respect cultural differences and at the same time develop a strong sense of Canadian identity in the children of our multicultural society. This responsibility, however, must also be extended to parents and concerned citizens, as the task of building a nation and preserving its multicultural character cannot rest solely on the shoulders of children and their teachers. Ultimately, it is each person's responsibility to protect the equality and dignity of all members of a society. Through our actions and thoughts, we are constantly educating each other for living in a multicultural society.

**More Information**

Other pamphlets in this series tell more about education in Ontario. For copies, please contact:

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Toll-free calling may be available in your area. Please check the blue pages of your telephone book.

Ministry  
of  
EducationHon. Bette Stephenson, M.D., Minister  
Harry K. Fisher, Deputy Minister

## Multiculturalism: A Canadian Reality

The most precious resource that Canada possesses is its people, whose roots are in North America and almost every other part of the world. They have brought to Canadian society every major world religion and language. They have also contributed their literature, music, folk traditions, customs, and lifestyles. Thus, cultural diversity is a basic characteristic of Canadian society.

We who live in this multicultural (literally 'of many cultures') milieu enjoy benefits and opportunities for growth that are denied those who live in more homogeneous environments. Over time, aspects of the many cultures with which we have daily contact become part of our attitudes, beliefs, customs, and lifestyle. Each of us, then, through these continuing experiences, is a product of the many cultural factors that compose the society in which we live.

Multiculturalism is a Canadian reality; it is a state of being and a way of thinking about others. Our commitment to it as a philosophy and as a way of life means that we not only accept cultural diversity, but cherish it as a positive feature of our society.

## Multiculturalism in Education

The Ministry of Education acknowledges the responsibility of preparing all pupils to live in our multicultural society and in an increasingly interdependent world. Accordingly, it strives to ensure that the three principles of Ontario's multicultural policy — equality, freedom of access to public services and facilities, and the right to maintain one's cultural heritage — are operational in all schools.

Every child, of whatever colour, race, religion, age, or sex, has the right to be treated with respect and understanding. Our schools demonstrate their commitment to this principle by:

- ensuring that all students have equal access to the educational and recreational facilities available in the school system;
- helping all students to achieve their potential in physical, intellectual, emotional, social, cultural, and moral development;
- guaranteeing, for all students, freedom from physical, verbal, or psychological abuse in our classrooms, playgrounds, and school communities;
- playing a positive role in settling problems that involve interracial or intercultural tensions or conflict.

The educational programs in our schools are designed to assist and encourage each pupil to:

- develop and maintain confidence and a sense of self-worth;
- develop and retain a sense of personal identity by becoming acquainted with the historical roots of the community in which he/she lives as well as maintaining a sense of continuity with the culture of his/her origin;
- understand and appreciate the points of view of ethnic and cultural groups other than his/her own;
- develop an understanding of such concepts as community, conflict, culture, and interdependence;
- learn the social skills and attitudes upon which effective and responsible co-operation and participation depend.

The Ministry of Education's curriculum guidelines and resource documents form the foundation on which courses and programs in the schools are based. Several of the documents reinforce key aspects of the policy of multiculturalism, and new curriculum guidelines and resource documents will continue to foster an appreciation of multiculturalism and to promote positive attitudes towards people of all races and cultures. Teachers are encouraged to develop courses and programs that are consistent with the philosophy of multiculturalism and which reflect fairly and accurately the reality of Canada's multicultural society.

In short, the philosophy of multiculturalism is reflected in our schools' policies, organization, and programs; in the teaching methods and materials used; in the courses of study; in assessment and testing procedures; in the attitudes and expectations of the school staff; and in all interaction with pupils, parents, and members of the community.

## Multiculturalism in Action in the School System

Since the job of school systems is to develop programs and services that meet the specific needs of the students and parents in their jurisdictions, these will differ from system to system in some respects. Aspects of the policy of multiculturalism, however, will be present in the programs and services of all school systems and may include some of the following features:

- a child-centred approach to teaching, which recognizes children's needs, interests, and backgrounds as important considerations in the planning of lessons, units, courses, and programs, and which aims to develop the positive attitudes that children will need for a satisfying life in a pluralistic society;
- the development of learning environments that recognize the needs and rights of all children and that foster an attitude of acceptance towards all individuals;
- emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge and the development of attitudes that will develop awareness and appreciation of the strengths of a multicultural society;